Innovation has potential to advance health equity

With billions of dollars of annual investment in health startups—$10.7B of venture capital in 2019 alone—\(^1\) and deep resources committed to innovation in large health care and health-focused tech companies, the health innovation sector has incredible potential to advance health equity. Total estimated economic gain associated with reducing racial health disparities is $135B per year.\(^2\)
$135 BILLION  
total economic gain per year if health disparities removed

$42 BILLION  
untapped productivity due to health disparities

$93 BILLION  
excess health care costs due to health disparities

$175 BILLION  
economic impact of shortened life spans

3.5 MILLION  
lost life years associated with premature deaths

$230 BILLION  
projected economic gain per year if health disparities eliminated by 2050

Infant mortality rates are 11 deaths per 1,000 for Black children, 8 for Native American children, 5.2 for Hispanic/Latino children, and 4.8 for White children.

Graphic courtesy W.K. Kellogg Foundation | Altarum
Current models of health innovation resource allocation, evidence development, solution design, and market selection do not incorporate an equity lens, failing to realize potential gains and risking exacerbation of health, racial and social injustices.

Group formed to ensure equity in health sector innovations

The AMA External Equity and Innovation Advisory Group’s purpose is to advise the AMA on the "Ensure Equity in Innovation" strategic approach, one of the five approaches defined in the AMA’s three-year strategic plan dedicated to embedding racial justice and advancing health equity.

With this strategic approach, AMA is committed to ensuring equitable opportunities and conditions in health innovation for historically marginalized and minoritized people and communities by following four objectives:

1. Embedding racial justice and health equity within existing AMA health innovation efforts
2. Centering, integrating, and amplifying historically marginalized and minoritized patients, innovators, and investors in health innovation
3. Engaging in cross-sector collaboration and advocacy efforts
4. Equipping the health care innovation sector to advance equity and justice

Through quarterly meetings and regular communication, the Group provides the AMA Center for Health Equity leadership team and other internal AMA equity and innovation stakeholders with thought leadership, expert analysis, strategic guidance, and support for external stakeholder engagement and communication.

Priorities for health innovators

The AMA’s vision is that the U.S. health innovation sector: (1) prioritizes resource allocation to launch and scale solutions that are meaningfully advancing health, racial and social justice, and (2) the race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation and gender identity of health care investors and innovators mirrors that of our nation, in both proportional representation and allocation of resources.

External Equity & Innovation Advisory Group members

URL: https://www.ama-assn.org/about/ama-center-health-equity/ama-external-equity-innovation-advisory-group
Copyright 1995 - 2021 American Medical Association. All rights reserved.
The Equity & Innovation Advisory Group is comprised of external leaders with expertise at the intersection of health equity and health innovation, including in the development, scale, and funding of new companies and solutions, investment and payment models, emerging technologies such as AI and digital health, the advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the innovation ecosystem, upstream causes and social determinants of health inequities, and models for centering marginalized patients and communities in solution design.

The Center for Health Equity seeks diversity in the perspectives and characteristics of members, including, but not limited to, organizational type and role, geography, generation, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and ability – with an emphasis on amplifying the voices of historically marginalized and minoritized innovators, investors, patients and communities.

Members are selected based on individual expertise and experience, not as a representative of an institution, association or company.

Additional information

- Equity strategic plan
- AMA health equity efforts, articles and studies
- AMA Center for Health Equity
